

The movement toward recognizing the importance of preserving the African American cultural richness led to the passage of a joint resolution of the Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commissioners that established a joint City/County African American Heritage Commission.

The mission of the Asheville/Buncombe County African American Heritage Commission is to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures, buildings, and culture of the African American experience and to advise elected officials on issues concerning the enhancement of the economic, social, cultural and educational lives of African Americans in Asheville and throughout Buncombe County. The 9-member commission includes representatives from Asheville and Buncombe County.

## Goals

The Commission seeks to:

- Increase the social, political, and economic value of African American heritage.
- Encourage and demonstrate respect for all heritage.
- Encourage the documentation of African American heritage.
- Institutionalize African American heritage as an ongoing goal of preservation.
- Explore every area of Buncombe County for African American contributions.

## Services

The Commission will accomplish its goals by:

- Providing advice and technical information—in partnership with the local, regional, state and national organizations—to individuals and groups who want to preserve historic places;
- Encouraging and supporting the listing of African American historic sites in the National Register of Historic Places and the placement of Historical Markers to recognize and interpret places important in African American history;
- Promoting the infusion of African American history into the curriculum of public schools through a partnership with the local school systems and charter schools and the North Carolina Department of Education;
- Providing a forum for people interested in preserving African American heritage to learn what is happening across the county and state, to share success stories, and to receive technical information through meetings and workshops; and
- Collaborate with other organizations and agencies to encourage the preservation of Asheville and Buncombe County African American history and culture.

## Work plan

1. Develop a Historical Marker Program.
2. Launch an online newsletter highlighting news about and people involved with African American historic preservation in the county.
3. Develop a plan for an annual Diversity Conference/Workshop.
4. Develop a Preserving Our Places in History Award(s). The award(s) are intended to recognize the efforts being made by a number of individuals and organizations to preserve the legacy of the African American presence in Asheville and also to encourage others in these efforts.
5. Host an annual community forum to discuss efforts to preserve the legacy of the African American presence in Buncombe County.